[Ibuki Satsuki's Comic Collection]

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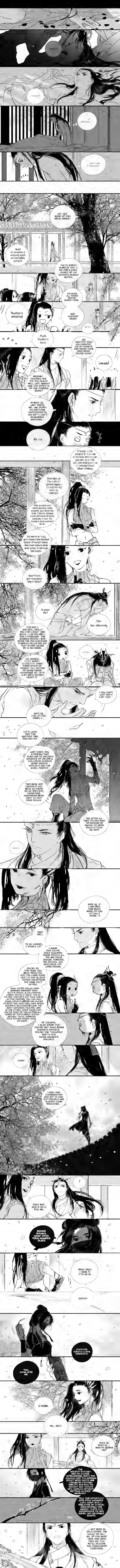
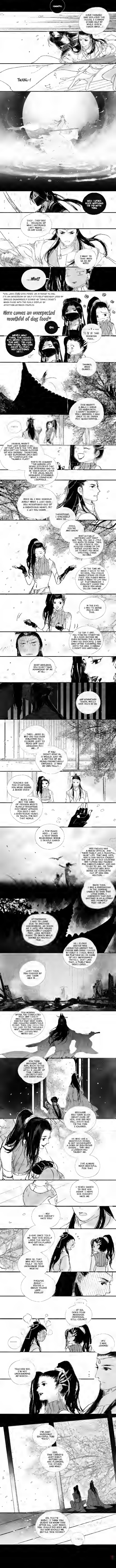

......!
A DREAM
WHY AM I NAKED?!
OH~ SO NONE OF YOU WERE AWARE!
Yeah! So teacher's actually such an incredible person!
THAT'S RIGHT, RUMOUR HAS IT, NO ONE'S EVER HEARD OF HIS ZITHER'S DEADLY NOTES,
BECAUSE ALL THOSE WHO'VE HEARD THEM
ARE ALREADY DEAD!
Teacher's amazing!
......
Aiyah, teacher's here!
GO PRACTISE YOUR CALLIGRAPHY. DO 20 SHEETS AND BRING THEM OVER WHEN YOU'RE DONE!
Uwah!
MORNIN', TEACHER SHI. DID YOU SLEEP WELL LAST NIGHT? ARE THE EFFECTS OF THE POWDER GONE?
M-MISS QI, LAST NIGHT, WE... WE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING INAPPROPRIATE, DID WE? I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING...
We did.
I really didn't expect it. You look so refined and proper, yet who would've thought that you'd be so unrestrained after drinking.
Even though I'm a strong person myself, I could hardly keep up with you.
One moment you were like this, next moment, you were like that. I had to change positions several times because of you. You couldn't stop yourself at all.
You were so loud, you roused the kitchen helper from her sleep. She even asked what was going on through the walls.
Why? Don't you remember any of that?
Teacher Shi?
How... how unbecoming.
......
IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL, REALLY. YOU HAD A DROP TOO MUCH, PLUS YOU WERE FED A STIMULANT. THE ELDERLY DOCTOR SUN FROM THE TEN-THOUSAND FLOWERS VALLEY DID SAY THAT THOSE DRUGS WERE NO GOOD.
US JIANGHU TYPES AREN'T PARTICULAR ABOUT THESE KINDS OF THINGS. THIS MATTER OF BEING TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF, LET'S JUST BOTH FORGET ABOUT IT!
Y YOU CAN'T JUST SAY IT LIKE THAT
MISS QI, I'VE LET YOU DOWN, I...
LET'S LEAVE THAT FOR ANOTHER TIME, TEACHER SHI
LAST NIGHT, YOU ATTENDED THAT FUNCTION TO UNCOVER EVIDENCE OF UNLAWFUL COLLUSION BETWEEN SOME GREEDY OFFICIALS AND THE REBEL FORCES
THEY WERE NOT CERTAIN IF YOU WERE AN ENEMY OR AN INNOCENT, THEREFORE ASSASSINS WERE SENT TO TEST YOUR SKILLS.
SO, AFTER ALL THAT, DO YOU WANT TO BORROW MY XIAOBAI TO SEND YOUR LETTERS OR NOT?
......
MISS QI, IF I MAY ASK, HOW MUCH MORE DO YOU ACTUALLY KNOW...?
VERY WELL.
TO BE HONEST, I KNOW A LOT
I KNOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN TEACHING THESE PEOPLE ALL THE WAY FROM TAIYUAN. HOWEVER, THE SCHOOL HAS BEEN YOUR LIFE LONG DREAM.
YOU'RE 25 THIS YEAR. YOU WERE INDUCTED INTO THE LONG SONG SECT AT AGE 11. YOUR FATHER HAILS FROM THE SAME SECT AS YOU.
YOUR ZITHER SKILLS RANK AVERAGE AMONGST YOUR SECT'S PEERS. A CALLIGRAPHY LOVER, YOU'RE A GREAT FAN OF YU YAN. POETRY'S NOT YOUR FORTE. AS FOR PAINTING, YOU CAN ONLY DRAW LOTUS FLOWERS AND DUCKS AT BEST. YOU HATE FISH, HAVE NEVER BEEN IN A RELATIONSHIP, AND THE MOST EXPENSIVE ITEM YOU OWN IS THE ZITHER. ASIDE FROM THAT, YOU'RE FOND OF COLLECTING ALL KINDS OF TEXTS ABOUT SUPERNATURAL TALES. HOWEVER, YOUR FATHER BURNS THEM ON SIGHT
OF COURSE, I ALSO KNOW THAT YOU'RE NOT ZHAO GONG SHANG'S DISCIPLE. YOU'RE THE "HEAVENLY WAY"'S SPY, SONG ZHUMEI'S DISCIPLE
AIYAH
LOOK, OUR CONVERSATION HAS YET TO END, BUT TROUBLE HAS ALREADY COME KNOCKING
!
FRET NOT. SHE'S HERE FOR ME.
XUANZI NIANWU. HAND OVER YOUR NUMBER PLATE.
YEAH, YEAH, I HAVE IT. IT'S HERE.
CATCH!
RECEIVER CONFIRMATION COMPLETE.
YOU, COME WITH ME.
I KNOW.
WA...WAIT!
MISS QI, WHAT'S, WHAT'S GOING ON?
THE SOCIETY ORDERED HER TO GATHER INTELLIGENCE. BOTH THE JIANGHU AND THE IMPERIAL COURT WERE UNDER HER DOMAIN OF RESPONSIBILITY. SHE WAS TO RECORD AND REPORT HER FINDINGS WITHOUT GETTING HERSELF INVOLVED.
THAT SHE INTERFERED WITH YOUR BUSINESS LAST NIGHT WAS A VIOLATION OF ORDERS. CONFISCATING HER NUMBER PLATE IS IN ACCORDANCE TO OUR RULES. HER SENTENCE AWAITS.
...BUT MISS QI ONLY BROKE THE RULES TO HELP ME. IF YOU MUST TAKE HER AWAY, TAKE ME TOO. WE'LL RECEIVE THE PUNISHMENT TOGETHER.


HMMPH.
EVEN THOUGH SHE VIOLATED THE RULES, I CANNOT STAND IDLY BY WHILE SHE'S TAKEN AWAY…!
TWANG~!
HER DUTIES HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU.
THEY… THEY DO! I… BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT… IN ANY CASE…
I WANT TO TAKE MISS QI AS MY WIFE!
…What?
*GOU LIANG 狗粮 (DOG FOOD): AN INTERNET SLANG, IT'S AN EXPRESSION OF SELF-PITY/SELF-MOCKERY USED BY SINGLES (HUMOROUSLY DUBBED AS "SINGLE DOGS") WHEN FACED WITH THE PUBLIC DISPLAY OF AFFECTION BETWEEN COUPLES
Here comes an unexpected mouthful of dog food*
OH.
……I……%¥# THIS BOOKISH FOOL.
NEVER MIND THEN, THE HIGHER UPS NEVER SPECIFIED THE NEED TO HAUL YOU BACK, YOU CAN AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS HERE.
THANKS, MISS GUARD.
THIS WASN'T A MAJOR ISSUE TO BEGIN WITH. I DIDN'T SCREW UP YOUR MISSION, I WAS ONLY TO BE TAKEN FOR QUESTIONING…
HAHAHA, WASN'T THAT LADY GUARD A BALL OF FUN? SHE'S THE TYPE WHO WOULDN'T DO THINGS OUTSIDE OF HER ORDERS. THEREFORE, IF HER SUPERIORS ONLY SAID TO "CONFISCATE THE NUMBER PLATE"
SHE'D BE ADAMANT "THE HIGHER UPS NEVER SPECIFIED THAT THE OFFENDER HAD TO BE TAKEN BACK", EVEN IF THE USUAL RULES REQUIRED OTHERWISE. WHAT A CONVENIENT LOOPHOLE.
MISS QI, I WAS SERIOUS ABOUT WHAT I JUST SAID. YOU INTERFERED OUT OF A RIGHTEOUS HEART, YET I LET YOU DOWN.
THEREFORE, I SINCERELY WISH TO…
AIYAH, YOU'RE MISTAKEN!
WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED LAST NIGHT WAS THIS: YOU HAD A LITTLE TOO MUCH TO DRINK. THEN, ON THE STREETS YOU SPOUTED POEMS ON THE ENTIRE JOURNEY BACK. AS TO WHAT YOU WERE SPOUTING, I HAVE NO IDEA.
BY THE TIME WE MADE IT BACK TO THE SCHOOL, YOU COULD BARELY STAND ON YOUR FEET. YOU PUKED WHENEVER I TRIED TO LIFT YOU UP. FURTHERMORE, I COULDN'T CARRY YOU SINCE YOU WERE TALLER THAN ME.
IN THE END, I HAD TO BRING YOU IN LIKE THIS.
TO TOP IT OFF, YOU STARTED STRIPPING IN A DAZE BEFORE WE EVEN ENTERED THE ROOM. I WAS SO SHOCKED, I RAN AWAY AFTER THROWING YOU ONTO THE BED. I SWEAR I DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING…
REST ASSURED, YOU DIDN'T TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ME AT ALL…
ANY ADVANTAGE TAKEN, WOULD HAVE BEEN BY ME.
…THEN…MISS QI, WHY DID YOU RISK VIOLATING YOUR ORDERS JUST TO FEND OFF THAT ASSASSIN FOR ME…?
IF YOU DIDN'T STEP IN, IT WOULD JUST BE A MATTER OF ME BEING PREMATURELY EXPOSED. IT WAS MY OWN FAULT.
TEACHER SHI, FOR STARTERS, YOU WERE DOING A GOOD DEED.
ALSO, I'M NOT THE KIND OF PERSON WHO'D BLINDLY INTERFERE IN OTHERS' AFFAIRS. YOU SAID I HAD A RIGHTEOUS HEART. IN TRUTH, I'M NOT THAT NOBLE.
A FEW YEARS AGO… I HAD A NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOUR WHOM I DEEPLY CARED FOR.
HER FATHER WAS A MINOR OFFICIAL AND THEIR FAMILY LED A PEACEFUL, QUIET LIFE. THAT WAS, UNTIL HER ELDER SISTER CAUGHT THE EYE OF AN OLD COURTIER. HER FATHER WAS FRAMED FOR EMBEZZLEMENT AND HAD TO GO TO JAIL. HE THEN COERCED HER INTO BEING HIS CONCUBINE OUT OF HER OWN VOLITION…
BACK THEN, I WAS A GREENHORN IN THE JIANGHU. UNABLE TO TAKE THAT LYING DOWN, I CORNERED THAT OLD BASTARD IN AN ALLEYWAY AND PROMPTLY BEAT HIM UP…
AFTERWARDS I HAD TO LEAVE DUE TO ANOTHER ASSIGNMENT. AS SOON AS I LEFT, HER HOUSE INEXPLICABLY CAUGHT FIRE. HER MOTHER BURNT TO DEATH WHILE TRYING TO PROTECT HER.
HER ELDER SISTER WAS ABDUCTED AMIDST THE CHAOS AND DISAPPEARED WITHOUT A TRACE, WHILE NO FURTHER WORD CAME OF HER IMPRISONED FATHER. JUST LIKE THAT, A FAMILY WAS DESTROYED…
JUST THEN, YOU PASSED BY AND TOOK HER IN…
FOR MONTHS AFTER, YOU CONDUCTED YOUR OWN COVERT INVESTIGATIONS, LEARNT EXACTLY WHAT WENT DOWN, AND COLLATED IRREFUTABLE PROOF. THEN, YOU REPORTED THE CASE TO THE "HEAVENLY WAY", THEREBY ENSURING THAT JUSTICE WAS METED OUT…
YOU THEN BROUGHT THE GIRL BACK TO THE LONG SONG SECT. AFTER I LEARNT OF THIS, I WOULD SECRETLY VISIT HER EVERY YEAR…
BECAUSE YOU TOOK SUCH GREAT CARE OF HER, SHE DID NOT FALL APART DUE TO THE FIRE I CAUSED.
HE WHO HAS A RIGHTEOUS HEART IS NOT NECESSARILY A DOER OF RIGHTEOUS DEEDS… THAT WAS A LESSON YOU TAUGHT ME.
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN GRATEFUL FOR THAT.
I NEVER DARED TO SEE HER AGAIN. I HOPE SHE DOESN'T HATE ME.
NO! SHE DOESN'T HATE YOU!
S-SHE ONCE TOLD ME THAT SHE REALLY LIKED THE SISTER WHO OFTEN PLAYED WITH HER.
MISS QI, THAT WAS NOT YOUR FAULT. DO NOT UNDERMINE YOUR WORTH!
Y-YOU'RE GREAT— YOU'RE A GREAT YOUNG LADY! REALLY!
……
…IF SO, DOES YOUR MARRIAGE PROPOSAL STILL COUNT?
PFT! I WAS JOKING!
TEACHER SHI, I'M NOT UNDERMINING MY WORTH.
I'M JUST SUDDENLY GRATEFUL FOR "FATE".
SEE, THIS TIMING'S JUST RIGHT. BEFORE US, ARE FLOWERS, THE ZITHER, AND WINE!
OH, THAT'S RIGHT. I THINK YOU OUGHT TO KNOW THIS AFTER ALL. LAST NIGHT, YOU REALLY DID KISS ME, SO HOW SHOULD WE SETTLE THIS SCORE?

Translator's Notes

THE SOCIETY [illegible] HER TO GATHER INTELLIGENCE. BOTH THE JIANGHU AND THE IMPERIAL COURT WERE UNDER HER DOMAIN OF RESPONSIBILITY. SHE WAS TO RECORD AND REPORT THE HAPPENINGS WITHOUT GETTING HERSELF INVOLVED

More on the Jianghu

*The Jianghu(江湖) is usually simply translated as the pugilist/martial world for brevity's sake, but it's actually more than that. An (underground)sub-society parallel to the main stream one, it's a romanticized world embodied by a whole host of colourful characters: adventure-seeking martial artists, chivalrous outlaws, disenfranchised knights-errants, secret societies, cultists, quacks, gamblers,swindlers, itinerant entertainers, thieves, beggars, and vagrants of all sorts.